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## BUILDING FOR THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

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Two years ago our high school opened with a new principal and an entirely new faculty in charge. Such breaks are all too common in small schools. They are unfortunate for the students, and they make trying situations for the principal and the teachers. For the students, they usually mean changes in scholastic policy, changes in school regulations, and changes in the ways in which many things are done, and it is hard to become accustomed to these changes; indeed, it is positively harmful for students to have so many twists and turns in their educational paths. For the faculty, the changes mean the encountering of ill-concealed hostility from students to policies which seem stricter than those formerly in force or at least unnecessarily new and strange. Even where there is no hostility the new faculty often has to listen to innumerable references by the students and even by the parents to the way "they did it last year."

The new policies, in large measure, are not conscious reversals of the policies of the former régime, carried out in the house-cleaning spirit in which representatives of different political parties succeed each other in public office. They only represent the conscientious effort of the new authorities to carry on according to their knowledge and convictions as to school management in general and the available information about the particular school. Especially is this true in reference to the minor details in the conduct of school activities which the new staff would as soon have one way as another but which the newcomers are not likely to carry out in exactly the old way, unless the old staff has transmitted to the new a clear record of the school as it left it. This, then, is the need suggested: that those who administer a school should transmit to their successors, not merely the school building, its physical equipment, and its students, but also the institutions and the methods of the school, as organized and carried on to date, through some more permanent

medium than an interview or two between outgoing and incoming principals.

Aside from this obligation to their successors and the future of the school, school teachers and school administrators need to define their work to themselves for the present welfare of the school. They need to know what they are doing and why they are doing it; or rather, they need first to know for what purposes they should strive and then to perform their work so as to accomplish these purposes. Else, unless they are geniuses at doing the right thing always at the right time, their work cannot be well rounded; some things will be given too scant attention and others too much, and many matters will be forgotten until it is too late, or until almost too late, when they will receive feverish, ineffective, eleventh-hour handling.

Impelled by these convictions, we, the faculty and principal of the Terryville High School, after surviving the throes of readjustment which our presence and acts caused for a year, set before ourselves last autumn as the main projects of the year's work the construction of definite manuals, or outlines as we refer to them, in each main branch of study, namely, English, social studies, science, mathematics, foreign language (one for Latin and one for French), and business education. These were to be worked out by the individual teachers in the different branches, in co-operation with the principal, and were to be reported on at the various monthly teachers' meetings throughout the year. At the first meeting, by way of preparation for the year's work, we discussed the report of the Commission of the National Education Association on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, *Cardinal Principles in Secondary Education*, with special reference to the means by which the school could meet all of the seven main objectives of education defined in that report, and also with reference to the contribution which each subject could make to one or more of the objectives. With the conclusions of this discussion in mind, we constructed the outlines from month to month as the year progressed. In each, we defined first the aims for which we should strive in the particular branch of study. Second, we built up the material, that is, the types of work which we should employ in order to reach the

aims as stated. Third, we formulated reasonably standardized methods and procedure. All was done, of course, after careful thought and study and in the light of experience. To each manual we appended a list of reference books on the particular branch of study in the school library.

It was the principal's especial task to construct an outline of the administration of the school and of its work in educational guidance. The former is divided into sixteen main sections, covering the matters indicated, as follows:

1. The principal and the school: his relation to the superintendent and the town school committee and his main administrative policies.

2. The teacher and the school: her relation to the school in general (including faculty activities), to the administration of the school, to her courses, and to her students (including here the most complete statement of the school's disciplinary policy); her extra-curricular appointments and assignments to routine duties; and observations as to the proper care of rooms and material.

3. The student and the school: an outline of the regulations and information about school life and work of concern to the students and a statement under the heading, "the student as a part of the school," of the point of view of those at present in authority as to the student's place in the school and the spirit desired in the students.

4. The public and the school: the means to be utilized for keeping the public in touch with the purposes and work of the school.

5. Scholastic work: length and number of periods in the day, limitations on the assignment of subjects and periods to teachers, the program of studies, with regulations governing choices of courses and basic ideas in the framing of the program as it is, main scholastic policies (as to the planning of work and procedure in the classroom), and plans for future contingencies.

6. Physical education: its aims, types of activities and instruction included, method and procedure, equipment, and reference material.

7. The daily schedule.

8. Supervision of instruction: time allotment, arrangement to coincide with individual conferences with teachers, plans for supervision, methods, and the spirit of supervision.

9. Educational guidance: a short paragraph referring to the larger special outline on this phase of work. The title is here used to include both vocational and moral guidance; the essence of the scheme, as carried out in this school, is that guidance is a continuous process throughout the high-school course of the individual student. Talks to the student body, personal conferences with each student each year, and individual study and writing in connection with certain courses each year are all interwoven in a specifically outlined way to carry out the purpose of the work. The special Educational Guidance Outline,

after defining the purposes and general scope of the work, describes its various aspects in detail and includes, in addition, a "Summary Chart of Vocations," appropriately grouped, with references on each vocation; suggestions for vocational decisions and vocational study for students; suggestions for teachers; definitions of terms used; and reference material.

10. Extra-curricular activities and institutions, with complete details as to their conduct and supervision.

11. Library: management, arrangement of books, cataloguing system, regulations for its use, how new books may be purchased.

12. Office files: where and how various records and files are maintained.

13. Mechanics of administration: a calendar of routine paper work and other duties for the end of the year, the beginning of the year, periodically throughout the year, on occasion, and as convenient; blank forms; examinations and grading; absences, tardiness, and dismissals; correspondence; work of the student office assistants; textbooks, supplies, and apparatus; the school plant and supervision of it.

14. The school calendar for the usual year.

15. State standards of approval.

16. Principal's personal schedule for a typical week.

A special guide for teachers has also been prepared, incorporating Section 2 of the Administration Outline, supplemented by a calendar of routine reports and duties and by a section on school information. A set of definitely formulated student regulations are also in force and are matters of definite record. The outlines are kept in a special file together with the following "special records": a list of textbooks used with the price of each, a list of supplies and apparatus on hand, a list of pamphlets in the pamphlet file, a list of the catalogues of educational institutions kept on file, a list of illustrative material in the school, and fire-drill regulations.

Will the outlines work after they are prepared? This question might well be asked. They are plainly of no use unless they do function. For the teacher, the secret of making them effective lies in using them in making up her plans and schedule each week; that is, before she plans her week, she should go over the outline for her branch of study to see the particular matters defined therein which need attention during that time. The principal has a key to all of his activities in Section 16 of the Administration Outline, which defines his usual weekly schedule, marking different phases of administration for attention at different times of the day or week;

this enables him to make a well-balanced detailed schedule at the end of each week for the succeeding week. The constant rereading of their several outlines cannot but familiarize teachers and principal more and more closely with their work; and it is not so long and tedious a task as it may seem, for the outlines are arranged topically, with headings and subheadings, and the key-phrases are underlined, all to facilitate perusal.

We cannot permit ourselves to get the idea that in framing these outlines we have made a groove into which we may settle comfortably during the rest of our incumbency. The outlines are not final in any sense. They are essentially dynamic in character, for it is distinctly proposed that teachers and principal make notes as to suggested additions or revisions which occur to them throughout the year as experience seems to prove such revisions desirable; at the end of the year a thoughtful general revision of each outline should be made after a thorough discussion between the principal and the teachers concerned. Furthermore, each outline is supplemented by a list of specific suggestions for further development through thought, study, investigation, and experiment.

We feel that the advantages of preparing and maintaining such outlines and special records as have been described to be chiefly these:

1. Teachers and principal will be more sure to make their work function in every way because they have clearly defined what they ought to accomplish.

2. Definite, detailed information concerning all of the institutions, methods, and work of the school is transmitted to succeeding teachers and principals who (*a*) may thus become much more quickly acquainted with the school and its work than they ordinarily would, (*b*) may save much time which would otherwise be spent in seeking information about the details of the particular school's activities or in planning such details anew for lack of adequate or trustworthy advice, and (*c*) may avoid much of the unpleasantness of readjustment.

3. The information regarding school institutions and methods which is transmitted to the new staff makes for fewer breaks in

school routine to which students need to accustom themselves and therefore for a greater degree of contentment in the student body.

4. The fruits of the mental energy of a good principal or a good teacher are conserved not only for his own use, wherever he may go, but for all of the schools which he leaves behind him. Thus these outlines are truly conservation projects.

5. A reasonable continuity in school work, by which the projects for each year may be built on the accomplishments of earlier years, regardless of changes in administration or faculty, may be expected, to the immeasurable benefit of the students, who can be led to understand the meaning of their scholastic education when it follows a unified, progressive plan.

Will one school administration follow the outlines prepared by another? As has been suggested, few if any principals go into office with the desire to overturn all of the devices of their predecessors. Few indeed would not be thankful at least for the detailed and specific information about school life which would acquaint them at once with the character of the school placed in their hands. Reasonable men would surely take careful note of the educational structure erected by those who carried on before them; if they felt it to be fundamentally sound, they would usually give it a fair test, adding to or repairing definite parts of it as the need became apparent and carrying out any extensive remodeling in a gradual way. That is the most which those who laid the foundations and built the structure as it stood at first could ask; if they expected to improve it themselves, they ought naturally to expect that others can do so. The all important consideration is that whatever is done be planned in the light of what has been done.